

To: Senator Andrea Stillman, Representative Andrew Fleischmann  
Members of the Education Committee

From: Marilyn Scanlan White, [atwmsw@sbcglobal.net](mailto:atwmsw@sbcglobal.net)  
Reading Language Arts Consultant in private/public schools for thirty-one years

Re: HB 5350 An Act Concerning Achieving Universal Literacy by Grade 3

Date: March 14, 2012

I support HB 5350. Good reading and language arts skills are a key to school achievement and indeed success for life. Reading, a complex skill, requires quality instruction. I support this bill with the following additions:

1. Include oral language/vocabulary development for needy children from **birth to age three**. Studies prove that the earlier we reach children, the easier it is to prepare them so that they are ready to learn to read by five years of age. Involve physicians and visiting nurses who will provide health checks and note language development of children. Children who are not progressing in language development should have a literacy specialist assess and recommend additional instruction for parents. They should also have the option to enroll such children in community outreach programs that are run by literacy specialists.
2. Our schools need principals who have an interest in literacy and knowledge of literacy development so that they can identify what good literacy instruction looks like in the classroom and understand the importance of hiring highly-qualified literacy personnel. Schools that have successful literacy programs show evidence of strong principal leaders. (Booth, D., & Roswell, J. (2007). *The literacy principal*. Ontario, Canada: Pembroke Publishers, pg. 15). To do so, I recommend that the state require principal candidates to have a minimum of six credits in reading/language arts as part of their master's degree program. The need a literacy vision before they become principals.
3. Effective literacy instruction in the classroom is most important. Early Childhood through grade 6 certifications should require 12 credits in reading and language arts instruction.
4. All schools should have at least one Literacy Specialist/Coach who can teach, remediate, and lead classroom literacy programs.
5. Children who are deficient in reading at the end of grade three and cannot achieve a satisfactory score on the reading component of the state-wide mastery examination should not stay back. They should be placed in a transition grade three program.

Thank you for all of the work that you do to help our Connecticut students achieve.